3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

758 Before closing this section on rational treatment of disease certain points on care of the sick may be added which have an indirect bearing on curative measures proper.

As a rule, the sick were well looked after by their relatives and friends. Encouraging words and hopeful good wishes were expressed to an ill person and these helped recovery. If the patient voiced a desire for any particular food this would be procured if possible. When on one occasion Singer's very ill husband expressed a wish for roseberries, an old man visiting him at the time rushed out, picked a big bunch of them and brought them back at once. Singer seeded, mashed them up and mixed them with tallow and set before her husband a bowlful of them which "he went after as if he were starved." The next day when some friends were visiting him he remarked: "I can't get enough of that roseberry soup." At this, one of them hastened out at once and brought back a large quantity. A little before this another friend had prayed at his bedside and wished him good luck. "Those prayers and that soup," added Singer, "seemed to bring him out of his illness. They made him strong." When Al Chandler's boy, Jimmy, had typhoid fever, and said he was hungry for plums, Mrs. Stevens went a long distance to procure them for him.

According to Al Chandler, "no matter how sick a person may be, there is always one rallying point, just before the end, when he wants to eat. When a person had no more chance to live, the Gros Ventres would fix him (or her) up, put on his best robes, and paint him up ready to die." [763]

734 Occasionally, in the old days, a sick person might be abandoned. "The Gros Ventres," Coming Daylight recalled, "were moving southward across the Missouri River. Before crossing it they left behind a Gros Ventre woman and her two- or three-year-old girl baby. The woman was very ill. They left her and the baby in a little shelter. They sort of threw her away.

"Some time after that the Crow happened to travel that way and crossed the Missouri from the south at the same place. There they saw the baby walking around in the bush . . . she would eat roseberries and pick up grasshoppers and eat them after breaking off their legs. The woman in the shelter had died and was beginning to smell.